

Saturn's rings

To discuss ...

What are Saturn's rings made of..?

-- Chunks of ice.

Some chunks are very small, some are as big as a house.

*(Scientists are now finding lots of water in outer space – frozen as ice.
For instance, many comets are full of ice, like giant snowballs.)*

What caused the rings to form..?

No one knows for sure, but scientists have some theories:

-- The rings could be the pieces of a moon that broke apart.

-- The rings could be the remains of a shattered comet that was captured by Saturn's gravity.

(The spacecraft that's on its way to Saturn, called "Cassini," is scheduled to arrive there in July, 2004, after a journey of seven years. Saturn is almost a billion miles away.)

To do ...

Draw a simple picture of the "Earth with rings" on the blackboard.



What if the Earth had rings..? How do you think things might be different..?

-- How would the sky look, especially at night..?

-- How might it effect the weather..? (The rings cast a giant shadow.)

-- Could they create any problems for satellites..? The Space Station..?